

Obama's State of the Union Address

"I've proposed cuts to things I care deeply about, like community action programs."

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program

We urge Congress to support continued funding of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program. CSBG funds are used effectively and efficiently in Fresno County by EOC, a (501(c) (3) corporation governed by a twenty-four (24) member tripartite Board of Commissioners. Eight of those twenty-four members are public elected officials or their designee; eight members are from business, public agencies, or community groups; the remaining eight members are elected low-income target area covering the county. This issues that the funds have the greatest impact and are used to address Fresno priorities

Like the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program, CSBG funds are allocated to the states and then onto communities through a formula, with less federal oversight and fewer federal requirements than categorical grants. The CSBG formula determines each jurisdiction's funding level based on poverty population; once disbursed, the money is passed on by the states to Community Action Programs to be spent on community priorities in the areas of employment, education, income management, housing, nutrition, emergency services, health and economic security.

The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) provides U.S. federal funding for Community Action Programs (CAPs) to provide economic opportunities at the community level. Like other block grants, CSBG funds are allocated to the states and then onto communities through a formula, with less federal oversight and fewer federal requirements than categorical grants. The CSBG formula determines each jurisdiction's funding level based on poverty population; once disbursed, the money is passed on by the states to CAPs to be spent on employment, education, income management, housing, nutrition, emergency services, health and economic security as determined by a local Board of Directors.

Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC) is the designated Community Action Program serving the City and County of Fresno. Founded in 1965, EOC has spent over four decades investing in people and helping them become economically independent. The scope of service provided by EOC consists of all facets of self sufficiency services and economic development. They range from pre-school education to vocational training; from juvenile and drug abuse counseling to treatment for serious juvenile offenders; from youth recreation to senior citizen hot meal services; from energy conservation education to crisis intervention; from preventive health care to prenatal nutrition education; and from vocational counseling to job placement services.

EOC is a private, nonprofit (501(c) (3) corporation governed by a twenty-four (24) member tripartite Board of Commissioners. Eight of those twenty-four members are public elected officials or their designee; eight members are from business, public agencies, or community groups; the remaining eight members are elected low-income target area covering the county.

EOC today and has historically used CSBG funds in two ways.

First CSBG, because of local control, is used to respond to emergencies or disasters often caused by weather. Today, EOC continues to provide emergency food to families affected by the water related disaster in West County.

Secondly, EOC invests in emerging needs or issues facing the County. CSBG funds are what allowed EOC to open the first Head Start Classrooms in California during the summer of 1965. Investing CSBG funds in establishing a WIC led to EOC providing the first WIC voucher in the State of California. CSBG investment in energy crisis intervention led to the current LiHeap Program. Once it was realized that saving energy was more desirable to just subsidizing energy cost, CSBG investment led to the creation of the Weatherization Program. Other examples of how EOC invested CSBG funds in creating new and diverse programs that contribute to the quality of life include a health clinic, family planning services, food services including a summer feeding program, transportation services, YouthBuild, workforce connections, summer youth employment, foster grandparents, farmers markets and the Local Conservation Corps.

Today, EOC's investments include:

- **School of Unlimited Learning:** Where our investment keeps open a charter school where teens who find it difficult to fit in and succeed in a traditional high school are offered an alternative learning environment where students are able to receive an education tailored to fit their needs.
- **Sanctuary-Transitional Living Centers:** Where our investment provides homeless young adults and young parents up to 24-months of residential and supportive services that promote independent living. The primary focus is to ensure that these young adults successfully transition into independent community member.
- **School Age Child Care:** Where our investment provides childcare just when parents need it the most. Children receive quality care before and after school, during holidays and vacations, and when parents are in school, in training, or must work.
- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC):** Where our investment provides for greater access to a program that provides nutrition education, nutrient-rich supplemental food, and health and social service referrals to pregnant mothers, new mothers, infants and children up to 5 years of age and younger by providing nutrition education, nutrient-rich supplemental food, and health and social service referrals.
- **Foster Grandparents:** Where our investment support to volunteers who extend their love and wisdom and devote time and attention to nurture an infant, a child, or a teenager who otherwise might not receive heartfelt sharing and caring.
- **Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI):** Where our investment provides comprehensive financial services, training, and asset development for low-and moderate-income residents and businesspersons. Since created by EOC in May 2008, the CDFI has helped hundreds of entrepreneurs realize their dreams. We also help Fresno County residents to become economically stable and enter the economic mainstream by helping them establish credit

We will continue to invest in these programs until we are able to grow them into programs with sustainable funding sources. At that time EOC will identify new areas of need where an investment of CSBG fund will create another program with growth potential.

This has been our history and this is who we are today. And this is why EOC has grown into one of the most successful and effective CAPs in the country.

The Community Services Block Grant only accounts for about 1.5% of EOC's budget, but it is the only truly locally controlled money. CSBG funds allow us to respond to Fresno issues, Fresno emergencies, and Fresno needs as determined by a Board of Commissioners composed of Fresno folks.

As the budget deficit is addressed there will be budget cuts. CSBG will allow EOC to, perhaps, soften the impact on those who struggle the most here in our community.